

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM YEAR TO YEAR"

ALL THE YEAR ROUND

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ALL OR NOTHING.

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&c. &c.

CHAPTER II. IN THE MORNING POST.

IN the stateliest home and the best regulated household there will be an unusual stir, an upsetting of the ordinary course of things, on the morning of a day which is to witness a wedding in the family. If it be only the sympathetic flutter among the female portion of the establishment, some disturbance of the order usually so exact will be observable. The furnished house in Lowndes Street was not stately, and the Chumleigh household was not remarkably well regulated—perhaps because Lady Rosa was her own house-keeper. She prided herself on the fact, and gloried in the conviction that those wretches of tradespeople could not take her in, and that there was no waste in her kitchen. The household, including the colonel and Laura, had had a good deal to suffer in the preliminaries for the wedding of the only daughter of the house, and there was a pretty general feeling that it would be a mercy when it was over. This sentiment was also shared by the colonel and by Laura; indeed, the latter had wished many times that the good old custom of a honeymoon with a third for company had been still in fashion, and that her father might have had a holiday on the occasion, in the society of herself and Mr. Thornton. To be sure she could not find a precedent in any of the memoirs or novels which treated of those bygone days when people used sedan-chairs, and talked of "the" Bath. It was always the

bridesmaid who occupied the third seat in the postchaise.

The wedding, which was to take place at a fashionable and ugly church in the neighbourhood, was fixed for eleven o'clock; and there did not seem to be any particular reason why all the Chumleigh household should be astir several hours before the event. No reason, however, could practically be more particular than the will and pleasure of Lady Rosa Chumleigh. The note of preparation was therefore sounded betimes, and Laura was aroused from her insufficient slumber by her mother in person.

Lady Rosa had as little nonsense about her as the mother of Mr. Edmund Sparkler herself. She never followed the movements, listened to the words, or watched the looks of her beautiful young daughter with that silent, almost stealthy delight which is one of the deep delights of motherhood, enhanced by the unconsciousness of its object. She had never stood by the fair sleeper in the quiet night, listening to her even breathing, gazing at her restful face, as if this were some special miracle of nature wrought for herself alone of all the women in the world. She occasionally made domiciliary visits to Laura's room indeed, but they had practical purposes—at night, to see whether she had really put her candles out, or was breaking the domestic law by reading in bed; in the daytime, to examine into the tidiness or untidiness of the apartment.

Lady Rosa opened the door of Laura's room with her usual uncompromising decision, and called out, as she pulled up a venetian windowblind with a great bang:

"Laura, my dear! Laura! Time to get up. Isidore comes at nine, you know."

Then, Laura having sat up with a start, her mother looked at her sharply.

"H—m," she said, "your eyelids are quite red, and you look as if you had not had half enough sleep."

"I'm all right, mamma, thank you," said Laura, rubbing the telltale eyelids.

"You had better lie still till you've had some tea, if there's any to be had." Lady Rosa pulled the bell-rope at the head of Laura's bed vehemently, and went on to suppose they would be an hour bringing the tea, and to declare that she should not be surprised if there were nobody up in the house except herself and Brydges. Laura was protesting that she did not want tea, and would be ready in plenty of time for the ministrations of the hair-dresser, when her mother's attention, diverted by the sight of *The Morning Post* which lay on the dressing table, was turned off into a fresh channel of anger and suspicion. Laura knew perfectly well that she never allowed newspapers to be removed from the "library"—a back parlour of the furnished house. It was very extraordinary that she never could be obeyed in anything.

"I believe mamma would scold me about nothing, if I were going to be hanged," thought poor Laura, and was beginning to offer a vague excuse, which should not compromise the colonel, when Lady Rosa, who had taken up the newspaper, cut her explanation short by walking out of the room. Laura looked after her in some surprise, and presently heard the door at the end of the corridor opened and shut.

"Much ado about nothing," said the girl to herself, "and just as if this were any ordinary day in one's life." Here her mother's maid entered the room, and the business of the day commenced.

Laura would have been much more surprised if she could have witnessed Lady Rosa's proceedings after she left her daughter's room, and seen the discomposure of her countenance when she reached her own, and was free from observation. She sank almost with a gasp into the first chair that came in her way, and allowed the hand that held the newspaper to hang by her side, while she covered her eyes for a moment with the other. After a time she recovered herself, and looked attentively at a certain part of the outer sheet of the newspaper.

"No doubt at all about it," she said to herself; "there it is, plain enough! What an unfortunate coincidence; how dread-

fully unlucky! Has she seen it? I think not; I hope not. She could not be so unconcerned; she could hardly have self-command enough to put on such unconcern. And yet, how extraordinary it would be if she has not seen it, before her face, under her eyes, as it must have been! What shall I do? On the whole, which is most probable: that she has seen it, but has pride and cunning enough to prevent my finding that out—her eyelids were red; I'm almost sure she had been crying, and I'm quite sure she had been lying awake—or that the printed lines lay under her eyes, and she did not see them?"

Again Lady Rosa read those printed lines, and now she rose and paced the room, still holding the newspaper in her hand. Her face was plain and unamiable, with hard lines about it, narrow eyes, and a long upper lip, and the look of doubt and discomfiture it now wore was not beautifying.

"I can't do anything," so ran her thoughts. "Whether she knows or does not know, I cannot do anything. At least, I can only prevent her seeing it, if she does not know already. And if she does, it cannot be helped. Under any circumstances, what has happened is all for the best, and I have nothing to regret. Robert Thornton is worth a dozen of him."

Then Lady Rosa put away *The Morning Post* of the previous day in a drawer of her writing-table, which she locked, and having to all appearance recovered her self-possession, she emerged upon the scene of activity, where the bustle and excitement were now in full swing. Laura was dressed before her mother again entered her room; the final touches only were wanting to her toilette, and she was looking exceedingly lovely, in spite of the red eyelids and the white gown. Isidore had outdone himself; he was an enthusiast in his art, and he seldom had such a "subject" as Laura's shapely head. Madame Louise had "idealised a wedding-gown, fit for an angel like Laura," according to Laura's cousin and bridesmaid, Julia Carmichael, who was enthusiastic rather than accurate of speech; and the most exquisite of Alphonse Karr's bouquets had arrived from Nice, in perfect preservation.

"I am so glad you have come, mamma," said Laura with a smile, as she turned towards her mother her beautiful head, "to settle the question of ornaments or no ornaments. Julia votes for the pearls, but I do not like them in the morning."

"Did Mr. Thornton say nothing about his wishing you to wear them?"

"Not a word; but I am sure he would agree with me; he always does, you know, and he has such excellent taste."

"Then don't wear them, my dear. Your gown is perfect, and now I must go and get mine on."

"She did not stay a minute in the room," whispered Laura to Julia Carmichael, who was reluctantly putting the pearls back into their case, "and she looked somehow as if she could not. I really do think she feels about my going away at last."

"She knows nothing at all about it," thought Lady Rosa; "after all, it is always the almost impossible thing which is true. That 'he has such excellent taste,' was too hearty to have any heartburnings under it. She knows nothing, and by the time she finds out what has happened, she won't care a straw."

It really seemed as if Lady Rosa had put on a brand new temper with her ruby velvet gown—for of that colour and fabric was the costume she had selected to be worn on a blazing day in the beginning of August—so meek and mild was she under the influence of a secret sense of relief.

It was allowed by the uninvited spectators in the ugly church, by the crowd of idlers about the entrance, and also by the guests, that Miss Chumleigh's wedding was a very pretty one, and that Miss Chumleigh was a very pretty bride. Nobody could see much of her, to be sure; but her veil was splendid, and the dark hair and dark eyes did show a little under it; and then she carried herself so well, and her manner was perfect. As on most occasions of the sort, there was comparatively little mention made of the bridegroom. To the external crowd he was an accident of the occasion; and those inside the church noticed only that he was rather tall, and that his clothes were well cut. A bridegroom's natural insignificance attended Mr. Thornton; the usual importance with which for one day in her life the least beautiful, equally with the most beautiful, of girls is invested, attached to Laura Chumleigh. The wedding-guests were well selected among the most eligible of Lady Rosa's acquaintance, and everything was as it ought to be. A general imputation of thorough worldliness to a large gathering of people is apt to be as rash as it is in its essence uncharitable; but there certainly were not many of the persons

present at Laura's wedding and the feast which followed it, who took into consideration what manner of man he was to whom the brilliant girl had just confided herself for life. People in general knew very little about him, except the notorious fact of his wealth, and that the marriage had been arranged after a short acquaintance. Mr. Thornton was not, that anybody knew, in any set, and was a nobody in the sense of the cliques and coteries of society. With his fortune, however, and her own looks and good connections on the mother's side, Mrs. Thornton might do anything she pleased, short of penetrating the very very inner circles; especially as she would, of course, keep as clear as possible of that dreadful Lady Rosa. Laura's mother had been useful as a Ness; as an individual she could only hinder her daughter's success in the novel position in which she might take a line of her own.

A man who does not belong to a set, and who is said to know nobody by the persons who entertain the ingenuous conviction that they and their associates compose the everybody to know whom must naturally be the ambition of all well-constituted minds, might fairly be supposed to feel more embarrassment at his own wedding than even the traditional bridegroom. There was, however, not the least embarrassment in the looks or the demeanour of Mr. Thornton. He was, on the contrary, a man with whom even a casual observer would instinctively associate the ideas of self-possession and self-respect—a man who could never be, or be made to look, ridiculous. He was well-built, dark-haired, grey-eyed, thirty years old, with a remarkably keen and steady way of looking at the person whom he addressed in an accent which had the strength and character, without the roughness, of the North in it; with a certain lissomness and strength in his movements, and the ease of which was entirely unlike the ease of the classes who have been called "clothes-wearing," in default of a more accurate definition of the "grand air," as it is in this day of travestie. The beautiful little figure at his side did not look at all out of place there; and his glance fell upon Laura's sparkling face as she received the compliments of the company with an expression of devotion and of deep content, which made his face almost as striking, in its way, as her own.

The wedding-breakfast was like all

wedding-breakfasts—a bore to the chief performers in the social drama. Colonel Chumleigh was so dismally depressed that not even the significantly-bent brows of Lady Rosa acted as a warning to him to assume the virtue of sociability, which, on that occasion, he certainly had not. Lady Rosa, though she did frown at the colonel, was much less militant and dictatorial than usual, and was visited by occasional fits of absence of mind, to which the ecclesiastical dignitary who sat beside her submitted with resignation. He was, however, a little shocked, when Lady Rosa so far forgot herself and him as to interrupt him in a lengthy description of a visit to a pretty place in Suffolk, from whence he had returned only the previous day.

"On an interesting occasion also," his lordship proceeded to explain, "my nephew was the happy man, Harry Trevor. I think he has the honour of being known to you."

"Yes," asserted Lady Rosa, "I saw the marriage in *The Post*. I hope it is all you can wish."

"Well, well," said the bishop, raising a fat, white hand in deprecation of the unreasonableness of such a hope: "not quite all, perhaps, but there are many advantages, many advantages, and all we can wish is not to be had here below. There is not much fortune, not much fortune; her father is rector of Bevis, and an old friend of mine. The wedding did not go off with all the delightful smoothness of this occasion," here the bishop smiled and bowed with a similar delightful smoothness, "for just as everybody was sitting down to breakfast, poor Dr. Davenant was sent for in all haste to attend a death-bed."

"Indeed," said Lady Rosa, listlessly. "Could not he have sent a curate?"

"Well, no; not exactly, not exactly, on that occasion. It was not an ordinary occasion; not an everyday summons. The dying person was the principal individual in Davenant's parish; in fact, the proprietor of Bevis—"

"Wonderful roses, are they not, so late in the season?" said Lady Rosa, drawing a flower vase towards her with a jerk, and disturbing alike the symmetry of the table, and the equanimity of the bishop. "They come from Hertfordshire, and I don't think there are any roses like them. How difficult it is to get the old cabbage-rose now? It has become so rare, that one it almost surprised it has not come into

fashion; and, after all, there is nothing like it."

Lady Rosa ran on through half-a-dozen more sentences, all about roses, to which lovely products of nature the bishop was as indifferent as she was, with an appearance of almost vehement interest in her theme that attracted Laura's attention. She wondered whether Lady Rosa was scolding the bishop. His lordship sniffed at the flower-stand which Lady Rosa had pulled into inconvenient contact with his plate, but made no comment upon her outburst of enthusiasm, except a mental one.

"I have been told," said his lordship to himself, "that Lady Rosa Chumleigh has the reputation of being the rudest woman in England; and now I perceive that she deserves it."

The crowd in the street, which had fluctuated as to its numbers during the festive proceedings inside the house, received a large accession to its strength, when the balcony, which had been turned into a tent for the occasion, began to fill with the wedding guests, and a rumour spread that the happy pair were coming out, as carriages began to muster in the street.

Laura had retired, accompanied only by Julia Carmichael, "the working bridesmaid," as she called herself, leaving the other three ornamental young ladies to amuse themselves in the balcony-tent, and the important ceremony of changing the wedding-dress had been performed. The bride was giving some final directions to Julia about one of the little packets that had come in so conveniently as an excuse on the previous night, when Lady Rosa made her appearance, and was asked by Laura the most disconcerting question that could have been put to her:

"Mamma," said Mrs. Thornton, "can you tell Julia where to find yesterday's *Morning Post*?"

"Yesterday's *Morning Post*," repeated Lady Rosa, with a frown; "what can you want with it just now?"

"Only to see where Florence Daubeney has gone to. Her aunt and Sir John have left town. I knew she was going with them, and Julia saw their names among the departures yesterday, but she did not notice where they had gone to. I thought you might have the paper, as you took it out of this room."

"I know nothing about it."

"Never mind; Julia will find it some-

where about when all this fuss is over." Then she added with a sweet smile: "I want you to tell me that I looked nice in the white gown, after all, mamma. Everybody else said so, but I do want a little bit of praise from you."

"You looked better than you ever looked in your life," said Lady Rosa, with a sudden softening of her voice and face, which brought tears to the bride's bright eyes. It had been a most unsentimental wedding.

"I wonder I ever dared to say it," Laura added, when she told her husband how she had extracted a compliment from her mother; "I suppose it was the new-born courage of my emancipation, and I was trying my wings."

The long day had come to a close, and the house in Lowndes Street had been restored to something like its ordinary air of dingy orderliness. The colonel was tired, sad, and silent. Lady Rosa was tired, excited, and cross. Julia Carmichael was tired, but methodical and conscientious, as it was her wont to be. Every commission which Laura had given her, the faithful and slightly obstinate cousin resolved to execute before she would consider her day's work at an end. One of those commissions included the finding of *The Morning Post* of the previous day, and accordingly Julia set about looking for it in a methodical way, which meant not giving in until she had found it.

After a vain search in the lower rooms, and some infructuous questioning of the servants, Julia bethought herself of asking the colonel whether he knew anything of the missing newspaper. With this purpose she went upstairs, and knocked at the door of his dressing-room. No answer was returned, and Julia, thinking she must have been mistaken in supposing that her uncle was there, entered the room. It was unoccupied, and the door of communication with Lady Rosa's room stood open, a screen being drawn partly across it. Julia could see, beyond the edge of the screen, Colonel Chumleigh seated at his wife's writing-table, a newspaper, in which her quick eye recognised *The Morning Post*, spread upon the table before him, while at the far side of it stood Lady Rosa, bending forward, with a long, spiky forefinger planted on a certain line in the paper. As Julia paused, uncertain whether to advance or retreat, Lady Rosa tapped the paper emphatically, and said in a voice which banished her hesitation:

"I suppose you think this business was not hard to manage! Do you imagine everything would have gone off so well, if I had allowed Laura to see that?"

A CRIME IN THE WOODS.

At the north-eastern corner of Nicaragua dwells a small population of gold-diggers, French for the most part. Libertad is the headquarters of the colony. Hundreds of miles beyond civilisation, even such as rules in Nicaragua, the miners dwell about this spot, in thick woods, by lonely streams. From time to time they rendezvous in Libertad, to hold a week's jollity. Barbachella* was the recognised chief of the crew in my time. He travelled with us a good deal, and, on leaving, we gave him a reckless invitation to "come and stop," if ever he should visit England. Striking a lucky vein some months after, he allowed himself a trip to his home in Alsace, and called on us in passing. Dwells it not in the legends of the Naval and Military Club how he arrived at lunch-time, and presented to the porter the address we had given him, written on a dirty playing-card?—a hirsute monster, clad in bottle-green tunic, with unnecessary buttons of unusual magnificence, knee-boots that creaked, and Panama hat? Jack and I were lunching when thus invaded. We were young, and we quailed before that apparition. As for Jack, he fairly disappeared; whilst I, in the despair of fright, assumed a boisterous tone, spoke of game and Indians, and loaded my conversation with all the Spanish I could drag in. The poor old fellow saw his mistake—or ours—talked awhile awkwardly, his honest face all red, and left us, not without dignity. He never penetrated beyond the hall. I returned to lunch, conscience-stricken, but sustained by a sense of magnanimity superior, at least, to Jack's. He was ashamed, and said so nobly; but he added, with some force, that I would not have shown this moral courage in my own club. The repartee was crushing. In an awful picture I saw the hall of my own sanctuary invaded thus; I saw *De Mogyns* gazing at the visitant with no speculation in his s'ony eyes; I heard the rough Alsatian patois, which our hall-porter superciliously pretends to misunderstand; I heard the

* ALL THE YEAR ROUND, New Series, Vol. 20, p. 41, "One More Native Gentleman."

chaff in the smoking-room—and I was silenced.

But later years have taught me that honesty and kindness are not so common that he who possesses them should be lightly held. Therefore, on meeting Barbachella in the Strand the other day, I rejoiced to have an opportunity of making amends for boyish rudeness. I welcomed him as he deserves to be welcomed, and took his arm. Let it not be counted to my disparagement if I frankly mention that he wore clothes this time remotely like the attire favoured by Europe three or four years ago. Barbachella's famous beard had thinned—it hung to his waist in sandy grizzle—but the grave, bony face could not be mistaken, and the wrinkled eyes of German blue were frank and responsive to a jest as ever. Besure I took the good old fellow to my club this time, and made him happy. Amongst many things droll, and some affecting, which composed his budget of news from Libertad, he gave me the story that follows. I have "touched" it, of course, probably without adorning:

"You remember Barbier, un coquin, va? Small as an imp, and wicked as the great devil—but wicked, we thought, like a good fellow. Was it while you stayed that he had the row with Monseigneur le Nigger, notre cher préfet? When summoned before his court, Barbier dressed his horse in ribbons. You couldn't see an inch of the beast's skin for rosettes and streamers. He rode into the court-house like that, and when monseigneur, faisant les gros yeux, asked what he meant, it was a marvel to see how he hinted that Madame la Préfeteuse had rigged him out. Well, Barbier's vein failed, and he had a bad time. We all told him it was no use looking for lost ore in Libertad, where earthquakes, and volcanoes, and pronunciamientos have been tumbling the gold about for ever so long. He went on all the same prospecting round his place, until we got tired of helping him. Faut faire une fin, dites? If a man hasn't courage to start, he must be started with the whip. So at last Barbier saw he might travel or starve. As soon as he talked of something sensible we were ready enough to back him, of course. Amongst us we fitted him with all the necessaire and some of the superfluous; for he said he was going a long way into the woods.

"Before he left we gave our comrade a supper at Wolfe and De Barnele's. You remember their store?"

Most certainly I had not forgotten the tiny store—an elysium for these poor diggers, which alone seems to connect them with the civilisation they have deserted. At the mention of it, I saw again the long, rolling hills of Chontales, intersected by thin lines of timber, over which one toils to Libertad. I saw the little row of huts; the mud-built church, like a magnified pigsty; the track, always ankle-deep in clay, through which big, bearded men splash ponderously on their road to Wolfe and De Barnele's. That oasis in savagery consists of a toy-house store, in which one can scarcely turn, so blocked is it with goods; while at the back lies a narrow, windy chamber, where digging visitors put up in nooks laboriously excavated amongst barrels, and bags, and rolls, and hams, and ironmongery, and "miscellaneous notions."

Awake betimes in the morning—for heat, and flies, and restless diggers allow no sleep after dawn—through gaping boards one sees a grove of plantains at the back. As the sun touches them, their great silken leaves unfurl and loosen. Backing that untended orchard the forest rises, golden in the early light. Each leaf is picked out brilliantly, and along the wall of trees birds glide and go on wings of prism. Big, sailing butterflies hover above the grass. Can this be the scene one had beheld at night with a kind of superstitious awe—where moonbeams vanished as they fell, sucked in by the white sea of mist; when the sleeping woods thrilled with mysterious sound; and the plantains, floating upwards from an unseen stem, sparkled against the deep blue sky, as touched with frost? Rolling to the other side cautiously, for our mattresses are crankly balanced upon casks and bales, through a similar gap we behold the road. Indian girls, stunted and misshapen, go past by twos and threes, carrying water-jars, of which the shape has never changed since days of pagany—big, ugly globes, red and black, with double neck and spout, adorned with a snake of rudest fashion. Beyond the road more sunny meadows and more radiant woods, swelling up to the tableland of Chontales. How should I have forgotten Wolfe and De Barnele's?

"We entertained our man like a prince," continued Barbachella, "with tinned oysters, and American ham, and cheese. Then he made a speech, and said he was going to 'prospect' in Mosquito. We didn't like that news, be sure, for once

already some of us had brought the wild Indians down, and you know very well we didn't want them again.

"Next day Barbier started, with two Mestizo vauriens and Person—you recollect Person, a giant, a colosse, from Auvergne, who used to write his name on the ceiling with a five-foot crowbar? They had a provision of charqui and maize; the whites carried a gun each, and a pistol. As we saw them cross the stream, little Captain Girand said to me: 'Ces farçeurs là, ils reviendront avec tous les sauvages de Mosquite sur leur derrière!'

"Nothing was heard for two months; then, just after the rains began, a peon came into Wolfe's one night, and said coolly, betwixt one drink and another: 'There's a compadre of yours across the ford, shouting!'

"That's Barbier, for an ounce!' cried Wolfe, for, mind you, nobody else could be coming from that side. Three or four of us ran out, and there he stood, looking miserable enough, *ma foi!* in the dusk and rain. The river at Libertad is no more than a brook by rights, but it was running, just then, like a sluice, with the noise of a waterfall. We shouted to him to wait whilst one of us fetched a rope, but he didn't seem to understand. Before we guessed what the fool was going to do, he ran into the water!

"That was rough! We couldn't let him drown, but a fish wouldn't have been able to swim that brook. Barbier went before it like a leaf, and we should never have so much as seen his face again, if the current had not whirled him into a bush that overhung. He had just enough sense to cling in it—and there he was on one side, we on the other, staring. Wolfe ran back to fetch a rope and crowbar; we made a drag as well as we could, then the strongest of us whizzed it into the bush. After a throw or two it stuck, then a fellow put another rope round his body, and hauled along. At length he reached Barbier, just in time, for the man was silly with cold and fright, and in another moment he would have gone under. The man hitched the rope round him, and worked back. *Ouf!* that was a struggle! The water beat as on a rock, pounding above, dragging below, and Barbier was swung across head under, like a drowned cayman. But there wasn't so much life to pick out between the two, when the others pulled them to land.

"We carried the chap to Wolfe and

De Barnele's, and after rolling him about awhile, he came to and asked for drink, and we gave him enough to make grog of all Libertad river. And presently he sat up. 'Where's Person?' asked Wolfe.

"'Assassiné par les Indiens!' said he, in a kind of shriek. 'Ainsi que vous serez tous!'

I saw how this memory affected my old comrade. His weatherworn face glowed, his big lissom hands worked clutchedly. "That frightened you?" I said.

"Frightened? If you'd seen the man, his face green and white, his eyes burning through long hair all wet, you would have been afraid, as one is afraid of things uncanny. All ran for their arms, but when we remembered the swollen river, and heard the noise of rain outside, we felt easy that night. 'Tell us the story!' we said, but Barbier was too fevered to talk plain.

"We heard it next day. The rain had ceased, the stream gone down, and Barbier, dry and shaven, was all right again. This is what he told us.

"Those accursed peons who went with me had been traders in Mosquito, and spoke both Rama and Woolwa. Person and I knew nothing of them. We picked the brigands up whilst prospecting in the woods. They declared they could guide us to workings not far off in the Indian country, where nugget-like pebbles on a sea beach, and Person and I resolved to go with the fellows at any risk. I spent my last dollar in buying presents which they said were necessary, and we set out, as you know. The peons led us straight enough for six days, talking all the time of their discovery, and of the way we'd spend our gold. We passed several Rama villages, where the Indians looked askance at us, but gave no trouble. They were just like those we see here sometimes, except that they weren't drunk—big-headed, sleepy fellows, who watch you through the corner of their eyes, as long as they can keep awake, without saying a word.

"After six days the guides brought us to a path, two feet in breadth I daresay. On striking it, the rascals showed themselves very content, and chattered in some baragouinage of their own like crows at a feast. "We are coming to the place!" they said, and presently we reached a village bigger than any we had seen, containing, perhaps, two thousand inhabitants and a king. Except for size it didn't differ from the others. His Rama majesty lived in a

hut, surrounded by pigsties for the royal consorts. He was not effusive, *ma foi!* took our presents without a word, but with a look very unsuccessful, if it was meant to show gratitude. But nobody interfered with us, and, so far as the peons chose to tell, nobody asked what we wanted. They let us rebuild a hut that had tumbled to ruin, and after a few hours nobody seemed to trouble about us. The peons said we ought to stop a day or two to disarm suspicion, while they looked round. If we had hidden in the woods, for certain the Ramas would have discovered and murdered us. I did not see clear, but they appeared to know what they were about, and our lives hung on a thread.

"I had already begun to think that the peons were not acting square. They talked too much in their barbarous patois, and disputed warmly. Our friend Person was one of those fellows who believe that six foot of fool's flesh will carry itself through anything. One could not advise with him.

"After looking innocent a day or two, we took our guns and our pannikins early one morning, and set off into the woods. The peons led us to a creek, where, with infinite precaution, they washed a little mud. Such a show there was in the cup, that Person cried: "You brought it with you, rascals!" "Come and try for yourselves!" said they, climbing up the bank, and so we did. We washed, and found more than they. "Notre fortune est faite!" cried we. "Let us talk!" said one of the peons.

"We sat on the bank, all four. "This is nothing," began the eldest, Miguele. "Before we could wash out fifty ounces, the Ramas would be upon us. They know that so well, that they don't trouble. If we escaped this king, he'd raise the country. It wasn't worth while to come so far to lose our heads, and we two could have managed that without your aid."

"I was furious with disappointment. Person sat staring like a bull before a fence. But Miguele had not done.

"For centuries," said he, "the Indians have been picking up gold here and in other places known to them. They think gold sacred, and he who finds a nugget is believed to be favoured by the gods. Listen! They have a cart-load stored in their temple. That's what Salvador and I have risked our lives for!"

"Will they fight for it?" I asked.

"Certainly, if they catch us."

"And how shall we get away with the plunder?"

"Salvador and I have thought of that. The question is, are you with us?"

"It was wholesale murder he intended. I saw that in the brigand's face. I am not more particular than others, but the idea did not present itself to me in attractive colours. Besides, it was a terrible risk. Enfin, "We will talk of this again!" I said.

"That can't be allowed," said Salvador, a brute of a fellow, who counted his murders, I should think, as girls count lovers. "We hang together!" Then I noticed that these coquins had got possession of our arms whilst we washed in the brook.

"Person cried out, "Did you say there was a cart-load of gold in the temple? Then I'm with you, to live like a prince, or die like a thief." I added, "And I also!" for when Person went over, it was stupid to hesitate. In a flash of intelligence I saw then what the disputes had been about. Salvador wished to kill me on the road.

"We went back to the village, our late servants carrying the firearms. That night they told us the plan. Next full moon brought with it the great Indian feast of the year, between harvest and seed-time. Everybody in the village would be drunk, for these Ramas, when at home, don't allow themselves the joy of intoxication more than once a quarter; but then they take a fit of it. Only a few priests would be left on guard at the temple, which stood in a very lonely place some miles off. There was a reasonable chance that they also would take the opportunity of enjoying themselves. No one would be likely to visit the spot, after the first ceremonies over, for a week or more. Even if one of the attendants should escape, Miguele declared that everybody in the village would be too drunk to understand his tale, except the boys and women. A river flowed beneath the temple, by which one could escape to Bluefields with the gold, and there was always a score of canoes lying on the bank. The peons' scheme had been carefully thought out, and it promised success.

"We were not to go near the place until the time arrived. Meanwhile we hung about, looking innocent; but if ever a man carried his conscience in his face I was he. Because, *mes amis*, I am not

a fool. It was quite plain that those ruffians didn't trust me, and they clung to my arms. What for? That was the question I asked myself.

"The days dragged through slowly enough, but they passed too quick. The women were busy as ants, making drink, laying in provisions, looking up their husbands' robes. It was then our privilege to see Ramas wide awake, but they did not appear to greater advantage. When the Indian is sleepy, he throws things at his wife, and often misses; but when roused to the sense of manhood by a prospect of drink, he stands up and pounds her like clay. They are brave, these Ramas, but they are dead to the feeling of chivalry. It almost reconciled me to the idea of killing a few, to observe what brutes they are.

"The day arrived at last. At midnight before, the king and all his warriors left the town. Miguele told us that they had gone to the temple, there to offer up a baby or two; I felt more and more like an executioner handsomely paid for doing retributive justice. At dawn they returned, and the farce began. It is expected as a compliment from strangers that they should go into the street and admire the king's greatness; so we went. First marched a score of priests clad in mantles made entirely of guetzal feathers; some of which were so old and moth-eaten as to show generations of wear. After them came a lot of wild Indians, full-dressed in a leopard's tail apiece, making noises on a sort of flute—the thigh-bone of an enemy, Miguele declared. Three or four hundred howling youths pressed upon them, brandishing spears and machetes. Then came the warriors, painted like demons, coronets of feathers on their heads, cape and waist-cloth of the same, and long strips of gaudy plumage trailing on the ground. They danced and sang, rattling spears. Those few who had guns fired without ceasing. They held the piece at arm's length, tumbled head over heels with the recoil, and sprang up again to load like men of indiarubber. The royal consorts marched next, fifty or so, dancing before the monarch; their feather headdress and mantles worn like angel's wings enfolding a devil. A few old men followed, bent with wisdom, and tottering with experience, and then the king, dressed from head to foot in crests of humming-bird, with long feathers of the guetzal worked in here and there like an untidy fringe. After him, all the gamins

of the village passed by, yelling as hard as they could.

"They all bowed as the king went by; but he paid no attention. His royal eyes were fixed upon the ground, and all the cares of the world sat upon his brow. We pushed into the cavalcade and followed. There Miguele paid some compliments, and suggested that we should lie quiet a day or two in the palace. As the fellow had foreseen, this proposal did not exactly commend itself to a nigger sovereign with half a hundred wives. We were refused. Then said Miguele: "Your majesty will allow us to hunt in the neighbourhood whilst this feast lasts; for these caballeros are Frenchmen, and the consul at Bluefields will make a palaver if any harm befall them!" Our little chief was frightened, for King George doesn't stand nonsense. "Go where you will," said he, and the royal consorts raised a simultaneous howl of disappointment."

It may be well to explain in a parenthesis—seeing that the politics of Mosquito are not things generally known—that King George is the supreme monarch of these Indians. By-the-bye, this naked rascal alone, amongst earthly potentates, enjoys the privilege of quartering our Union Jack upon his flag. It was presented him, I believe, by Charles the Second, when the Mosquito savages were vastly useful in our buccaneering wars.

"So," continued Barbier, "then we were at liberty to absent ourselves without suspicion for a week. Everything had gone just as the infernal cunning of our villains wished. We strolled back to our hut. The fun had begun already, and warriors staggered about in every stage of pious intoxication. One might have supposed the town bombarded, so fast and furious was the discharge of guns. A spear whizzed between Salvador and myself, and stuck in a wall, quivering and gyrating. Person had his beard singed with the flame of a musket. It was time to pack, and we went. The live stock was running in fright towards the jungle, and we caught several chickens and a kid.

"The forest was still dripping with dew when we entered it. A difficult march all round the village lay before us; for we had struck the woods just opposite to our proper course. Miguele guided us without a fault. The most desperate joviality was reigning in the village, which lay close on our left hand all day. When we came upon the farm-grounds, walking grew

easier; but the afternoon had far advanced before Miguele lighted upon the path we sought. "Now," said he, "keep a look-out for your lives. It's a hundred chances nobody comes by; but if an Indian should appear, do you fools try to look as if you were taking a promenade. I'll account for him!" He still kept my gun and pistol.

"We met no one. Dusk settled on the woods, whilst it was still broad daylight in the open. We camped for the second time, and ate our stolen kid. When the moon rose, Miguele called us. I had taken an opportunity to sound Person whilst the peons slept, but he was as mad for the plunder as they.

"We travelled two miles in forest so high and so thick that the moonbeams could hardly reach our path. A spangle of light filtered through them, scarce bigger than a glowworm's lamp where it dropped. By the glimmer reflected from above, we followed Salvador, who crept cautiously along. Miguele came last. As we went duskily, stealing from turn to turn of the path, I knew what it is to be a robber and an assassin. Camarades, the sensation is not agreeable.

"Suddenly Salvador came to a halt. "The temple is there!" muttered Miguele behind me, and we crept into the bush whilst Salvador reconnoitred. He returned presently, and took Person by the arm whispering—we followed. Before us, hidden amongst trees that met above its roof, stood a low dark building of logs on a mound. I could see little of its size and shape, for all was dim; a red glow shone betwixt the timbers, as of a mouldering fire inside; a sickly smell hung on the air.

"We stole up, mounted the steps of turf, and peered through the chinks. A fire on the ground showed partitions of skin-hangings. Between the shadows they cast, black shapeless things glimmered under the walls. Two men lay asleep before the fire; their bracelets glistened. When we had looked long and carefully, Miguele drew us apart and whispered. We went round, two on each side, to seek other crevices. I thought for an instant of slipping away into the bush, but what would be the good of that? The Indians would catch me, or I should starve.

"All was dark round the temple, and we learned nothing. There might be a score of priests inside, but Miguele thought it unlikely; in any case, he was determined to risk it. After two or three words of counsel we crept to the door again, and

groped long for the fastening. None could be found. By a whisper and a clasp of the hand, Miguele directed us to put our shoulders to the wood. We did so. "Now!" he muttered, and with a crash the door gave way.

"I fell back. The sleeping men sprang to their feet with a howl. Salvador cut one down, but the Indian gripped him by the naked heel in his teeth; the other got Person by the throat. Miguele ran his machete through him, but he held on until the giant flung him bodily against the wall, toppling the idols down with a rattle. Then the others turned to Salvador, who was yelling with pain and fear. But suddenly an awful boom! The great drum of the temple rang out, seeming to rock the solid walls. Miguele leaped towards the sound; Salvador and Person, struggling with the Indian, dragged him across the fire, which threw up a fountain of sparks as the red-hot embers scattered; a reek of burning skins and feathers choked us, but all was still now. "A light!" cried Miguele, hoarsely. "In twenty minutes the Indians will be here!"

"Salvador paused with the match in his hand, whispering, "Hush!" A faint humming noise reached our ears. "Quick, hombre!" cried Miguele. "It is the river." But as he spoke a roar and a yell announced the Indians. They had followed us! I rushed out and round the temple. The path was full of them, hurrying and shouting. Their spear-points glittered. Person, I think, was after me, but a huge warrior pinned him in the dusk. At the other end of the building the path opened. I could just see it. I ran along, leaving the din of hell behind. Half-a-dozen pistol-shots rang above the Indians' yelling, and then all was over with those assassins.

"I ran fifty yards, and came to a river suddenly. It flowed clear and white as glass in the moonbeams, but a black shadow of the forest on each side bounded it. Half-a-dozen canoes lay there, with paddles inside. I sprang into one, cut the rattan fastening, and dropped down under the bank. But what man or what crew could escape Mosquito Indians on the water? As soon as they got a light they would miss me, and then I was caught, as sure as death. I pushed across the moonlit water, and paddled up. There was a bend just above the boat-place, and I had just passed it when the Indians came running down. I caught a branch, and lay still. Shouting to each other, they

leaped into canoes, and shot down the channel like a flash. No one thought of searching up-stream, for where could a man fly but towards Bluefields? A loud and angry throng remained on the bank, and I could see how drunk they all were. Before the boats had passed beyond sight, some began to stagger back. Presently the big drum sounded again, and the rest followed. It was life or death. Pulling cautiously by the branches, I went up. Long before I got out of hearing a horrid noise proclaimed that the Indian women had reached the spot.

"That was Barbier's story!" continued the old digger. "He had a fearful time in the woods, as you may suppose, seeing an Indian in every bush. As near as he could calculate, it took him four weeks to reach Libertad. Fortunately, he was carrying the bag of charqui, and so he did not starve."

"Did the Ramas come after him to Libertad?" I asked.

"No. We heard nothing of them."

"Frankly, now, Barbachella," I said after a long pause, "do you believe the story? Didn't any of the diggers think it strange that there should be an Indian village within six days of Libertad, where the value of gold is not known?"

"Well, I don't know," answered Barbachella meditatively. "A responsible man would not be hasty to say what there is or there isn't in the forests of Mosquito. But there were some who looked askance at Barbier when he came back from the woods one day with a bag of dust—which don't grow on trees in Chontales—and paid his debts, and said he was going home. A washerwoman swore she'd seen him crossing the brook with a heavy load. And they talked, after he'd gone, how his saddle-bags were heavier than a mule could carry. It's generally thought in Libertad—I may say as much as that—that if there was any truth in Barbier's story, he didn't tell the whole of it, and that he ought to be hanged if there isn't. Anyway, he had better not come to Libertad again."

OUR INDIAN ARMY.

I.

SAID Lord Beaconsfield in the House of Lords, when justifying the calling out of the Army and Militia Reserves: "It is not the last resource, but it is the first resource under our system. . . . Her Majesty will be able, in a very brief space of time, to possess an army of seventy

thousand men. It is double the force of Englishmen that Marlborough or Wellington ever commanded; but it is not a force sufficient to carry on a great war. If England is involved in a great war, our military resources are much more considerable than those you may put in motion by this statute."

The present employment of Indian troops, thus foreshadowed, in furtherance of Imperial war policy, is no novelty, as we shall see. The idea of using them, in peace time, to garrison some of our colonies, including the Mediterranean stations, has also occurred to former Cabinets. And under the last Derby-Disraeli Administration a Select Committee of the Commons, in 1867-8, reported favourably on its feasibility; but Mr. Disraeli was too much engaged with the problem of governing the country with a Conservative minority to take any action on the report. There can, however, be no doubt that the systematic employment of Indian troops beyond the limits laid down in the old Company's charter must, sooner or later, have engaged the practical attention of the Home Government, whether Conservative or Liberal; for it is the logical sequence to Honourable John's extinction and the amalgamation of his armies with that of the Crown.

The total strength of the Bengal, Madras, and Bombay Native Armies is about one hundred and twenty-five thousand men, just half of what it was in the Company's latter days. Of these, in round numbers, sixty-four thousand belong to the first, thirty-four thousand to the second, and twenty-seven thousand to the third. But this total represents only a small fraction of the available belligerency of the great Indian Satrapy. The entire population of the Peninsula amounted at the last calculation to a trifle under two hundred and forty million souls, of whom, according to the census taken in the years 1868 to 1876, a little over one hundred and ninety-one millions come under British administration; the remainder being the estimate for the Native States and the French and Portuguese dependencies. The British-Indian population, spread over an area of nine hundred and eight thousand eight hundred and thirty-four English square miles, gives an average of two hundred and ten persons to each mile. These one hundred and ninety-one millions of people may, for convenience, be distributed as follows: one hundred and

thirty-five millions to the Bengal Presidency, thirty-two millions to Madras, and sixteen millions to Bombay; besides eight millions in the Bengal and Madras limits, under the direct control of the Viceroy in Council at Calcutta. The male population of British India amounts to ninety-eight millions, of whom, for our purpose, we may take fifty millions as of a stock sufficiently martial to make fair soldiers of one kind or another. Exempting five-sixths of these fifty millions from service on account of age, physical or mental defects, the requirements of commerce, industries, and agriculture, religious objections, and other causes, we still have a sufficient number of men capable of bearing arms, with which to create a force, on the system now obtaining in continental Europe, equal to the combined armies—on paper—of the Great Powers. It is not here contended that it would be either politic or desirable for many reasons to do so, but the object at present is to point out that the materials undeniably exist for "bloated armaments."

The dominant religion of this vast population is the Hindoo or Brahman, counting one hundred and forty million votaries, while the Muhammedans only muster a little under forty-one millions; the Sikhs a little over one million one hundred thousand; Buddhists and Jains nearly three millions; Christians, exclusive of Europeans, nine hundred thousand; other denominations, five million five hundred thousand; and unknown religionists, half a million. The bulk of the Indian Army is composed of various Hindoo tribes, sects and castes constituting its most important element, whose creed and customs have insensibly leavened more or less most of the foreign religions imported into India. The most numerous of these exotic worshippers are the Muhammedans, being the descendants of Eastern Turks, Persians, Afghans, Arabs, converted Hindoos, or crosses between the Hindoos and strangers, divided among themselves into nearly a dozen sects. Besides these there are Aryans, who have adopted Islam, but have retained not only the manners but the laws of the Hindoos. The Indian Mussulmans fancifully divide themselves, after the manner of the Hindoos, into four castes or classes—Syeds, Shekhs, Moghuls, and Pathâns. All, as befits a conquering creed, are noble, but the first two, representing the tribe of the Prophet, and the direct progeny of his

son-in-law, Ali, are pre-eminent. The Muhammedans prefer the cavalry to the infantry branch of our service; but of course the infantry regiments have, notwithstanding, their due proportion of Mussulmans in the ranks. The native Christians belong to the Nestorian, Syrian, Catholic, and Protestant Churches, supplying most of the drummers and fifers to the infantry corps. The Sikhs, one of the most warlike components of the native army, in proportion to their total, furnish a larger contingent to it than any of the other religions. Of the Jews, Jains, Buddhists, and followers of Confucius, we need take no note, as they belong to the non-martial races, and the number of them in military service is inappreciable. The Parsees are chiefly traders and handicraftsmen, seldom cultivators of land, and never soldiers or sailors; alleging, as an insuperable objection to modern warfare, the use of firearms, which necessitates not only the kindling but the extinction of fire—in their religion an act of sacrilege. The more solid objection, besides a constitutional dislike to villanous saltpetre, consists, probably, in the superior temporal advantages to be derived from commerce and industry. The recently-reported offer to raise a Parsee Volunteer Corps in the city of Bombay, if true, would argue, however, that the aversion to gunpowder is not so insuperable after all, or that time works wonders in eradicating prejudices once deemed fundamental. The Parsees are found mostly in Bombay, Broach, and Surat, but their aggregate is very insignificant in India. These disciples of Zoroaster, the Protestant and Catholic Christians, and the Confucians, are the only people among the foregoing religionists that have not been materially "Hindooised."

The Hindoos formed, and still form, the great mass of the fighting material at our disposal. They have, as we have just seen, inoculated, to some extent, the followers of most of the other religions alongside of them with their own peculiar religious observances and pretensions. As it is with these we have mainly to reckon in obtaining our native soldiers—and more particularly when the question of service across the Kala Panee, or Black Water, arises—a few words on Hindooism and its bearing on foreign service are pertinent to our subject.

The caste difficulty was not a serious or very genuine one at the commencement,

and it need never have assumed the dimensions that it did, had it not pleased a series of Government officials to nurse the sentiment, and mature a Frankenstein for their own torment. In the institutes of Menu, four primary castes are laid down, created by Brahma: the Brahmans from his mouth; the Kshatriyas, Khutrees, or Chutrees, from his arm; the Vaisyas, from his thigh; and the Sudras from his foot. The office of the Brahmans, or priestly caste, is to interpret the Vedas, to conduct sacrifice, to act as teachers, lawyers, and statesmen. If poor, they are to be supported by alms, and only when existence is impossible by other means, are they to descend to military service, or certain defined commercial pursuits. They are invested with extraordinary sanctity, and even arrogate to themselves a kind of divinity. The Kshatriyas, or warrior caste, comprise kings, nobles, and soldiers, whose duty is to defend the people. The Vaisyas are supposed to engage in trade and agriculture. Between all these and the Sudras exists a wide gulf, the latter being enjoined to serve the others, and any injury done to them is considered a venial offence. There are, besides, a great number of mixed castes sprung from intermarriages of the primary ones. To each certain employments and handicrafts are assigned, making altogether a very complex and artificial system. Let us note that the institution of caste is unknown to the Vedas, and that the modern classification of Hindoo society is very different from the theory above indicated. Brahmans excepted, who are still to be found everywhere, the pure castes have almost disappeared, and are to be detected only in the upper valleys of the Ganges and the Jumna, most probably the Indian seat of the people who spoke Sanscrit, and invented the Brahman religion. In some parts of Southern India, the Kshatriya—or soldier, under his genuine Indian name—has given place to a local aristocracy. There also the original servile caste takes a high local rank, instead of the lowest, as elsewhere. Innumerable cross castes, of which many are only authorised by the people themselves, and which, more accurately, are only guilds or trade-unions, have arisen. The restriction of employments, excepting some exclusive Brahmanical functions, no longer exists. Brahmans serve as Sepoys and Sowars, and even as cooks. Most of the princes of India, as Scindia and Holkar, for well-known examples, are of low caste, while there is no

ordinary occupation that is not open to all classes alike. Caste, as it exists now, acts chiefly in restricting indiscriminate association in eating and drinking; hence, the assumed difficulty of orthodox separation in the confined area of a crowded transport. Loss of caste is incurred, not for moral turpitude, but for some ceremonial impurity, the chief sources of contamination being improper association, or improper food. But caste can always be recovered by judicious and liberal expenditure of money among the Brahmans and fellow caste men. The restrictions imposed in the Puranas on diet and manner of eating are mostly trivial and absurd, and seem to be set as so many traps for Brahmanical benefit. Among them is the prohibition of eating in a boat, freely cited in former times when high caste Sepoys demurred to embark on foreign service. Similar fantastic objections have been perpetuated and exaggerated by our own older officers in their laudable anxiety to respect the religious scruples, so called, of the native soldiers. At Hong Kong, when the transports carrying Probyn's Horse to the last China War were taking in fresh water for the Sowars, Lord Napier, not wishing to break faith in any way with them, told Sir Dighton Probyn to see that his men had the same facilities for superintending the pumping of the water into the casks as they had had in Calcutta. All the native officers to whom the order was given replied: "Anything you order, we will do, but it is quite unnecessary;" and the senior officer, a Brahman, said: "I do not care who pumps the water into the casks I have to drink from. If you order me to send a man to superintend the operation, of course I will do so, but it is quite unnecessary making any trouble about it; and if I do not care, why should the other men care?" The late Sir Herbert Edwardes was of opinion that, generally speaking, "all the races of India dislike foreign service and crossing the sea, but most of them will go for a consideration." He heard a Madras officer of experience relate his amusement and surprise at catching a high caste Hindoostanee officer buying a sheep's head and trotters in the bazaar in China, because he could no longer stand the climate without animal food. When laughed at, he laughed too, and said: "When I get back to Hindostan I can make it all right with the Brahmans." Mr. Caird, speaking of the Coolie exportation to the Mauritius, denied that

high caste men had any repugnance to that sort of service, the Brahmins often concealing their string in their waistcloths in order to be able to go. The Vedas, as we have said, say nothing of caste and its restrictions, and it is to the later and more corrupt Puranas that we are scripturally indebted for constructive prohibitions against sea-voyages. There is ample testimony that the Vedic Hindoos were acquainted with the art of navigation, and not averse to maritime adventure. Among the natives of the interior and of the north-west, the repugnance to the Kala Panee sprang probably from superstition, or that physical dread which inland peoples have of the ocean. The Bombay and Madras soldiers, even those of them recruited from Bengal, have none of this repugnance, owing, most likely, among other causes, to the familiarity with the sea acquired by service on the Coromandel and Malabar Coast stations. The caste bugbear has had a more pernicious effect on the Bengal than on the Madras and Bombay officers; and the Sepoys, observing this, have made the most of it. The Calcutta Government, in its nervous deference to such pretensions, even after changing the Bengal terms of enlistment from limited to general service in 1856, rather increased than abated the nuisance by palpable weaknesses. The Sepoys of all the three Presidencies have repeatedly served out of India, and whenever there has been any discontent or insubordination at the order for foreign service, it has nearly always been due originally to some injudicious and ill-timed parsimony in the matter of extra batta or rations; for Jack Sepoy, like our own Tommy Atkins, has a very shrewd eye to the main chance. He will serve abroad "for a consideration," which is seventeen shillings, extra batta included, per mensem, with rations, or seven shillings in lieu thereof. After all, not a very extravagant remuneration for expatriation and the chances of being shot.

To depict properly the many interesting races that enlist voluntarily in the Imperial Armies of India would require more space than can be here afforded, and we must be contented with sketching the most prominent among them. First, from their once formidable hostility in the field as an independent power, and their subsequent substantial aid as loyal subjects in 1857, come the Sikhs, who form so large and valuable a section of the Bengal army. Protestors against Brahmanism and Islam

alike, under their first Gooroo or teacher, Baba Nanuk, in the sixteenth century; and exalted into the mystic Khālsa, or chosen people, by the fervid eloquence of his successor, Govind, at the close of the seventeenth; they might be styled the Puritan Dissenters of India from a corrupt and effete Brahmanism, did they not retain the veneration for the cow, with other Hindoo puerilities, while rejecting caste in theory and despising the pretensions of a cunning and lazy priesthood. As Monotheists, Iconoclasts, and abhorers of the pig, they might assimilate with Islam, did they not detest the Muhammedan "Toorki," or Moghul, in whom they only see the ruthless conqueror and devastator of Hindostan. In this impartial hatred of Hindoo and Muslim lies the best guarantee of their loyalty to the British Raj. Of undoubted courage, with a natural aptitude for the profession of arms, and free from most of the pedantic and deterrent prejudices of Hindooism, the Khālsa makes an excellent soldier, as he proved when, after being organised and trained by Avitabile and Ventura, the Italian generals of the old "Lion of Lahore," he may honestly be said to have beaten us to a standstill at Ferozeshuhur and Chillianwallah; or, when enthusiastically following John Nicholson, from the Sutlej to the Jumna, he helped to replace the British standard on the walls of Delhi.

Alongside of these fierce sectaries in the Punjab are found numerous ethnological divisions and subdivisions, nine millions of whom are followers of the Prophet, six million Hindoos, and one million professing other creeds. These are known under the generic name of Punjaubees, who furnish several regiments of horse and foot, and equal the Sikhs in courage and physique.

The Goorkhas, who have excited so much interest lately, are in no whit inferior to the other races in any martial qualities, in some of which they are much superior, as in power of endurance and—although nominally Hindoos—in the absence of religious scruples calculated to interfere with the requirements of general service. They despatch their meals in half-an-hour, merely doffing the puggrie, and washing face and hands. They laugh at the orthodox Hindoos who bathe from head to foot and "make poojah," i.e., prayer and offerings, before eating, which they are obliged to do half naked in the coldest weather. The Goorkha soldier is willing to carry several days' provisions, to which

the Hindoo would object on pretence of losing caste. They are a yellow, ugly, squat, sturdy, and active set of men, with great energy of character and love of enterprise; absolutely fearless, adroit in the use of the rifle and their national weapon, the kookrie, a curved, heavy-bladed, trulent-looking knife; and when their British officers have once won their respect and regard, evincing a dog-like yet manly fidelity that is unique in its way. They cannot accurately be classed as British subjects, for although there are Goorkhas under British rule, the majority of those serving in our ranks are recruited from the independent mountain kingdom of Nepaul, where the tribe—of the Bhot, or Thibetan breed—first established its supremacy under Prithi Narayan in 1765-8. These hill warriors also have waged war with us on equal terms in 1816, and were not subdued without having inflicted more than one disaster, as at Kalunga, on the British arms. Thirty thousand of them, under the late Sir Jung Bahadoor, marched merrily with rifle, kookrie (and umbrella!) to our aid at Lucknow; and the old Sirmoor and Kemaon Battalions, now the Second and Third Goorkha Infantry, the former at present in Malta, were conspicuous for their dash, as well as for their stubborn valour, before Delhi.

The Raja-pootra, or Rajpoots, are "sons of princes" and born warriors. Of the true Aryan stock, and most fastidious of all the races of India on the point of unblemished descent, some of their clans, from excessive purity of blood, cannot intermarry with others less favoured. Their two great divisions are the Sooruj Boonsi and the Chandra Boonsi, or the Solar and Lunar races, some of whom claim—as the Rajpoots of Oude—descent from Rama, the demi-god, and "glory of his princely line," under whom they marched to the conquest of Southern India and Ceylon. But even the lustre of their descent pales before the miraculous origin of the four Agni Koola, or Fire-born tribes—foremost of whom are the Chohans—the heaven-sent champions of Brahmanism against schismatics and foreign foes.

Under Porus the Rajpoots succumbed to the Macedonian phalanxes of Alexander; but, in return, repeatedly repulsed the early Muhammedan invaders of their country, earning from Muslim chroniclers the reputation of being the most chivalrous, intrepid, and heroic of enemies. In personal appearance, the Rajpoots are tall,

robust, well-made, and handsome. With the Aryan caste of countenance, they have clear complexions, and, not seldom, grey eyes and brown hair. Averse to trade, unless it be as bankers or jewellers, they enlist freely in our armies, and also in those of the native princes. Many of the tribes, such as the Rahtors, will only take service in the latter. Generally vegetarians, they are not forbidden mutton or wild hog; but many of them take voluntary vows against meat.

The Jâts abound in the Punjab and North-west Provinces, being noted as good agriculturists and patient tax-payers. They are quiet and peaceful, unless roused by their chiefs. Although tolerably strict Hindoos, many of them scorn the Brahmans, and eat game, wild pig, mutton, and vegetables, but not beef. Personally, they are strong and active, brave and intelligent, and furnish some of the best soldiers under our flag. The Fourteenth Bengal Cavalry (Lancers), formerly Murray's Jât Horse, raised during the Mutiny, is composed of them, and did excellent service in that troubled epoch. The military prowess of the Jâts, whom Colonel Tod identifies with the Getæ of Herodotus, has been attested in history. They wrested large districts from the Delhi emperors, and established an independent state at Bhurtpore. In 1804 they joined Holkar against the British power, but were defeated by Lord Lake, at Deeg, after bravely holding the fort for a month. They defended Bhurtpore against the same general for four months, an unexampled length of resistance in our Indian wars, and then made peace, after repulsing four assaults, and inflicting a loss of upwards of three thousand men on the besiegers. Lord Combermere, however, took the fortress in 1825, when six thousand Jâts fell in the assault.

The Pathâns, or Rohillas, are Mussulmans, of the Soonee sect for the most part, and are brave, hardy, and warlike, but difficult to control. They rarely enter the infantry, but largely into the cavalry, and are great breeders of and dealers in horseflesh.

The Hindoo Mahrattas, inhabiting the Deccan, first rose to prominence under their famous leader, Sivaji, who founded a great empire on the ruins of that of the Moghuls. Their great strength, in the days when they swept over India, lay in their cavalry; and it is still in this arm that they prove most efficient. They have a natural love of the

horse, and their breeds on the banks of the Godavery are highly valued for military purposes.

The foregoing sketch may give some idea of the distinctive military capabilities of the most important races in our service. We shall see what they have done, as a homogeneous army, under British training and leadership.

The first native levies of John Company in his early days consisted of such personal retainers and office attendants as peons, burkundazes and chaprassies, dressed in native garb, and armed with sword and shield and matchlock. They were dignified with the name of Sepoys, a corruption of Sipahi or soldier. To the French is due the credit of first drilling, arming, and disciplining the natives of India in European fashion. About the year 1744, when it was found that whole armies, organised and trained in the Asiatic mode, could be routed by one battalion of European-drilled Sepoys, the English were quick to follow the example. The first British native regiments were raised in Madras, were few in number, and held mostly in reserve in the field to support Europeans. They were commanded by native officers, under the general control and superintendence of three, or at the most five, picked Englishmen. In the year when the dismal tragedy of the Black Hole was enacted, there were no trained Sepoys in Bengal, but Madras had fourteen battalions of them with an aggregate of ten thousand men. Two of these accompanied Clive to Calcutta, and fought with him at Plassy in 1757. In the attack on Madura, the native troops showed remarkable steadiness and hardihood in danger; and in the defence of Arcot, their heroic endurance and self-abnegation in offering to give up their rations of rice to their European comrades, and eke out a subsistence with the water in which it was boiled, has not been excelled in Roman or Spartan annals. At Wandewash, under Sir Eyre Coote, the French Regiment of Lorraine broke a battalion of British Sepoys, who received the charge in line, and instantly closing round the flanks of their assailants, by a few discharges routed them. In the struggles between England and France for supremacy in India, towards the close of the last century, the Sepoys were frequently opposed to other French regiments, such as the Royal Roussillon, De la Mark, and Aquitaine. At Cuddalore they actually crossed bayonets

with the Regiment of Aquitaine, in which Bernadotte was a sergeant and was taken prisoner. In after years, when King of Sweden, Bernadotte bore voluntary testimony to the valour of the Sepoys on that occasion, and said it was "an event which the Madras Army ought never to forget." To cite all the instances when the Sepoys of the three Presidencies under their British officers distinguished themselves by good service, would be merely to write a history of the gradual growth of the British Raj for a hundred years. With Sepoys mainly we broke the Mahratta power, and dispersed the Pindarries. At Laswarree, where the Mahratta battalions, trained by De Boigne, Perron, and other foreign adventurers, were routed, there was only one European regiment present. In Nepal, where the brunt of the war fell on Ochterlony's column, that general had no European troops whatever. At Meeanee and Hyderabad, where Sir Charles Napier annihilated the power of the Sind Ameers, there was only one white regiment in the field.

The Madras, Bombay, and Bengal Armies have been employed beyond seas from the earliest time almost of their existence. The Madrasees have assisted in the capture of Amboyna, Ceylon, Java, Mauritius, and the Isle of France. They have served in the two Burmese Wars, and in the first China War; and the Madras Sappers and Miners, under their distinguished commander, Colonel Prendergast, were in Abyssinia, and are now again in Malta. The Bombay troops have several times been sent to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to chastise piratical tribes, and have served under Outram in Persia, where the Third Bombay Cavalry rode through a Persian square at the Battle of Khooshab. They also went to Abyssinia with Lord Napier. The Bengal Army took part in the capture of Java, Mauritius, and the Isle of France, in the two Burmese and two China Wars, and also in the Abyssinian campaign. But of all the expeditions in which the Indian troops have engaged in furtherance of England's aggrandisement, the one bearing closest analogy to their present mission in Malta is the expedition to Egypt in 1801, under Sir David Baird, "to assist Sir Ralph Abercromby in driving the French from Egypt." The force, consisting of five thousand six hundred men, of whom two thousand six hundred were Sepoys, from all three Presidencies, landed at Kosseir, on the Red Sea, June 6; and,

marching one hundred and twenty miles across the desert to Kenah, on the Nile, dropped down that river in boats, to join General Hutchinson—Abercromby having been killed in action in March. On arrival, however, at the mouths of the Nile, the Indian contingent learned to its chagrin that it was too late for any fighting, as the French general had surrendered. In May, 1802, the expedition returned to India. We cannot conclude better than with an extract from an account written at the time: "Whilst at Rhoda"—about two miles from Cairo—"the Indian army attracted much surprise and admiration. The Turks were astonished at the novel spectacle of men of colour being so well disciplined and trained."

SONGS OF TRADES AND OCCUPATIONS.

"MEN of genius have devoted some of their hours, and even governments have occasionally assisted, to render the people happier by song and dance. The Grecians had songs appropriated to the various trades. Songs of this nature would shorten the manufacturer's tedious task-work, and solace him at his solitary occupation. A beam of gay fancy kindling his mind, a playful change of measure delighting his ear, even a moralising verse to cherish his better feelings—these, ingeniously adapted to each profession, and some to the display of patriotic character and national wants, would contribute something to public happiness. Such chants are worthy of a patriotic bard; of the Southey for their heart, of the Moores for their verse."

Thus wrote Isaac D'Israeli, father of the present Prime Minister.

This topic—trade songs, or songs of the people—is an interesting one. It denotes or connotes a human want, a yearning, a desire to pour forth the thoughts or feelings in a gush of song—not very poetical, perhaps, but sufficient for the natures to which it applies. This it is which led Fletcher of Saltoun to say: "If a man were permitted to make all the ballads, he need not care who should make all the laws of a nation." The saying has been worded in other forms, and attributed to other persons, but it contains a sagacious thought, to whomsoever it may have been originally due.

None of the Greek trade songs have been handed down in their original form; but Athenæus speaks of a song for the

corn-grinders; another for the workers in wood; another for the weavers; the reapers, the ox-drivers, the kneaders of bread, the bathers, the galley-rowers, had in like manner their characteristic songs. How far the momentous events of the last forty or fifty years may have wrought a change, may be worthy of enquiry; but Isaac D'Israeli remarked: "The gondoliers of Venice while away their long midnight hours on the water with the stanzas of Tasso; fragments of Homer are sung by the Greek sailors of the Archipelago; the severe labour of the trackers in China is accompanied with a song, which encourages their exertions and renders these simultaneous. Mr. Ellis mentions, that the sight of the lofty pagoda of Tong-Chow served as a great topic of incitement in the song of the trackers, toiling against the stream to their place of rest. The canoe-men on the Gold Coast, in a very dangerous passage on the bank of a high curling wave, paddling with all their might, sing, or rather shout, their wild song. Our sailors at Newcastle, in heaving their anchors, have their 'Heave and ho, rum-below!' The Sicilian mariners must be more deeply affected by their beautiful hymn to the Virgin. A society, instituted in Holland for general good, do not consider among their least useful projects that of having printed at a low price a volume of songs for sailors. . . . The Helvetic Society requested Lavater to compose the *Schweizerlieder*—Swiss Songs—which are now sung by the youths in many of the cantons; and various Swiss poets have successfully composed on national subjects associated with their best feelings. In such paternal governments as was that of Florence under the Medici, we find that songs and dances for the people engaged the muse of Lorenzo; who condescended to delight them with pleasant songs composed in popular language. The example of such a character was followed by the men of genius of the age."

Many old English songs are now lost. They were either not printed at all, or were printed as broadsheets, pasted or posted on cottage walls, and there left to decay. Some in the time of the later Tudors and early Stuarts, were gradually collected in small books called *Garlands*. In England, as in most other countries, the people had popular songs before they had books, songs which were transmitted orally from one generation to another; but it is certain that we now possess comparatively

few of these, often fancifully characteristic of the habits and feelings of the people. Very curious collections of county ballads have been made, such as those belonging to Lancashire; and when the county was marked by any peculiar industry, or natural productions, these found mention in many of the ballads.

In times when so many occupations were carried on in the open air, and when people went to bed at an hour singularly different from that which we now adopt, ballads and choruses were much in favour as an accompaniment to the out-door labours, or as depicting some of the joys or some of the dangers incident to them. Sailors' songs are very numerous; and it is pleasant to know that Dibdin is credited, on good grounds, with having rendered excellent service by his compositions of this class. The roughness and occasional indecorum of sea songs in earlier times are apparent enough; but Dibdin had the merit of retaining the sound substratum while discarding the objectionable accessories. The "sweet little cherub that sits up aloft," is believed by many a sailor, since Dibdin wrote, to keep a protective eye on poor Jack. The lyricist did not overstep the boundary of fact, when he said: "I have learned that my songs have been considered an object of national consequence; that they have been the solace of sailors and long voyagers, in storms, in battle; that they have been quoted in mutinies, to the restoration of order and discipline." It is known that the Admiralty some years ago sanctioned a revised edition of Dibdin's *Sea Songs* for the use of the Royal Navy.

Sea-going people and river-going people, besides actual ocean-going sailors, have their songs likewise. There are boatmen's songs in plenty on our rivers and coasts, often well-fitted to mark the rhythm or time of the rowers, as the gondoliers do at Venice. Fishermen have, in like manner, their songs; or, at any rate, there are songs which dwell on some of the incidents of fisher life—such as that which begins:

The boatie rows, the boatie rows,
The boatie rows fu' weel;
And muckle luck attend the boat,
The Merlin and the creel!

As to the goodly company of anglers, who can fail to know that the gentle craft has been made the theme of lyrical illustration? One ballad by Walton begins:

I in these flow'ry meads would be;
These crystal streams should solace me,
To whose harmonious bubbling noise,
I with my angle would rejoice, &c.

It is said that the fishing-tackle makers in the first half of the seventeenth century wrote or obtained anglers' songs; copies of which they supplied to their clients, to sing at the riverside and lakeside hostelry after their day's recreation. One of these effusions of whimsical character undertakes to show that physicians, lawyers, divines, politicians, manufacturers, shopkeepers, and courtiers, are all anglers in their several ways; if they do not catch fish, they strive to catch something else. The charming Italian melody, *O Pescator dell' Onda*, is known to many a fisherman on the sunny shores of the Mediterranean. A favourite bargemen's song may frequently be heard on the Calder in Yorkshire, and sometimes in more southern counties, probably valued for its rhythm rather than its words.

Hunting songs are abundant, generally concluding with something of a Tantivy or Tally-ho as a chorus. Old Towler is a well-known specimen of this class. Another begins:

There were three jolly huntsmen,
And they would hunt the fox.
And where d'ye think they found him?
Among the crags and rocks!

The songs of the husbandman or labourer have in all time occupied a place among ballad compositions. Dibdin, though not himself belonging to that class, knew how to make his muse speak cheerfully about field labour, as he did about sea life. His song has been much admired, beginning:

The ploughman whistles o'er the farrow,
The hedger joins the vocal strain;
The woodman sings the woodland thorough,
The shepherd's pipe delights the plain.

True this is the poetry of the agricultural labourer's life; but without a little poetry what is song? The carter or carman in country districts is a famous singer or whistler. The Carman's Whistle was known as a song so far back as the days of Queen Bess. Sir Walter Scott, in the *Two Drovers*, depicts Harry Wakefield singing a song:

What though my name be Roger,
And I drive the plough and cart.

Postboys are the theme of many a song; but as the song generally relates to drinking, such as *Three Jolly Postboys* drinking at the Dragon, they are not very commendable.

In Elizabeth's time maidens sang while employed in spinning, milking, knitting, lace-making, and other feminine occupa-

tions. Shakespeare speaks of the plain old songs sung by

The spinsters and the knitters in the sun,
And the free maids that weave their threads with bones!

The knitters in Wensleydale have a song so old that it must have come down from the Norse or Danish days. It is little more than a process of counting up to twenty, to keep time with the knitting-needle; but the words are almost unintelligible to modern readers. The lace-makers of the south midland counties have many songs among them—rather, we imagine, to relieve the monotony of the work than for the sake of the words. The dames'-schools, at which children are taught lacework, have their simple songs—useful perhaps in keeping the little folks regular in timing their work.

As to May-day songs, who can count them? They, or something equivalent to them, have been in favour among most nations, and throughout long ranges of centuries. They either usher in the spring, or celebrate the bursting forth of vegetable life under the increasing influence of the sun's genial rays. It is only incidentally that milkmaids became associated especially with the festival in England. The children in many country villages still go about with their garlands, singing some such words as

Round the maypole, trit, trit, trot;
See what a maypole we have got!

Smugglers are favourites with song-writers; indeed, a little bit of illegality seems to give a romantic touch which is rather relished than otherwise. Some of the Ramsgate boatmen are said still to sing a song about a sailor smuggler who attempted to run a keg of brandy on shore, and was shot by a preventive-service man while so doing; but he still made a struggle for life:

It was two one morning,
As I've heard many say;
Like a lion bold he took his oar,
For to get under weigh.
For six long hours he labour'd,
All in his bleeding gore;
Till at eight o'clock this man did faint,
Alas! he was no more.

We need not ask whether a lion bold ever took the oar; suffice it to say that popular sympathy was all with the smuggler and against the defenders of the customs' revenues.

Beggars, in the olden time, had their characteristic songs, couched in cant language very little known to the rest of the

world. Some of these are traceable for three or four centuries.

Reapers' songs are illustrated by what Dr. Johnson says of the West Highlanders: "The strokes of the sickle were timed by the modulation of the harvest song, in which all their voices were heard. They accompany every action which can be done in equal time (rhythm) with an appropriate strain, which has, they say, not much meaning, but its effects are regularity and cheerfulness." We know very little about vineyards in England, but vine-dressers' songs are numerous in France. Legrand d'Assoux says: "Men and women, baskets on arm, assemble at the foot of a slope. They stop, arrange themselves in a circle, and the chief or leader tunes up a joyous song, the burthen of which is sung by all in chorus. They then go up into the vineyard, begin their day's work, and frequently sing complete. At nightfall they assemble and sing again, at the close of their labours." There is something in the bright cheeriness of French and Italian skies that invites the jocund song as an accompaniment of outdoor avocations.

Mr. Chappell, in his excellent volumes on English Music of the Olden Time, draws attention to the fondness of working men for songs: "Tinkers, carters, blacksmiths, &c., are so constantly mentioned in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, and by so many writers, as singing music in parts, as to leave no doubt of the ability of at least many among them to do so. Perhaps the form of catch or round was most generally in favour, because, as each would sing the same words, there would be but one part to remember." The roundelay was mostly spoken of as "merry," and was evidently of a cheerful character. Barbers, smiths, clothworkers, cobblers, tinkers, tailors, were included among these rough-and-ready minstrels.

Ritson the antiquary collected many old weavers' songs. The Mercers' Company of the City of London used, some generations ago, to sing a song at their festive meetings in praise of their own guild, beginning:

Of all that are in London free,
The mercer is the foremost man
That founded a society;
Of all the trades that London grace,
We are the first in time and place.

We may well doubt whether this wealthy company, which boasts nobility, if not royalty, amongst its honorary members,

would condescend to sing such a song now. Similarly it is said that the Broderers or Embroiderers' Company held one particular estate on condition of singing a particular song after dinner on court days. A manuscript of the song was handed to the master, who sang it, all the other members joining in choros.

The Woolcombers, whose patron saint is St. Blaize, used to hold a festive meeting on their saint's natal day in many parts of England; bonfires were lighted at night on the hills. Hone describes one meeting which took place at Bradford in Yorkshire. Figures of a bishop, his chaplain, shepherds, shepherdesses, &c., were displayed, and an old song chanted. Tinkers used to be regarded as a merry set, somewhat devil-may-care. So far back as 1594 a song was entered at the hall or office of the Stationers' Company, There was a Jolly Tinker; and this has been varied under many forms. It is curious to notice in regard to tailors that, whether they have any characteristic songs among themselves or not, there is a multitude of songs satirically applied to them, such as The Prancing Tailor, who converts needle, bodkin, and shears into very different implements. Cobblers' songs are numerous; one, more than two centuries old, begins:

I am a jovial cobbler, sir,
Although I am but poor;
And always to relieve my friends,
I keep a groat in store.

The ballast-heavers in some parts of Cornwall sing while loading vessels with ballast. The words are of not much consequence, but the rhythm of the tune is said to enable them to keep time, and to prevent anybody from being a laggard in his share of the labour. There is a paper-makers' song extant in which the strange names given to sheets of paper of different sizes are wrought up into queer doggerel. The bagpipes were very popular in England in the time of Charles the First, and the pipers were employed to cheer up and instil rhythmical regularity into various bodies of labourers. An entry in the Gateshead town books, under date 1677, tells of payments "To workmen for making the streets even at the king's coming, eighteen shillings and fourpence; and paid the piper for playing to the menders of the highways for five days, three shillings and fourpence." The king here adverted to must have been Charles the First, before the sad days when his troubles commenced.

If we were to include children's songs

as another group, where should we end? To be a child, a boy, a girl, is not a trade occupation of course; but it is much more, in regard to the universality of many characteristics of juveniles. Creeds, politics, social position, become part of the mental stock of ideas by degrees; but before this period of life has commenced, or when it has only advanced a short way, children act very much alike in the general features of their character; and the thorough joyousness of their merry little songs is something delightful to see and hear. How delightedly they dance in a ring; how their bright faces beam with delight; how soon they learn to keep time and tune in the simple melodies, and rhythm in their intervals! As to the words, their very simplicity and merry nonsense tell in their favour—a touching type of little hearts which know no guile. What matters if Here we go round the Mulberry Bush, is sung without any bush at all? if This is the way we Wash our Clothes, is a bit of acted drama? if Five times Five are Twenty-five, is a playful attempt to make a portion of the dry multiplication-table easy? if Hush-a-by Baby on the Tree-top, is sung minus a baby? and if We'll not go Home before Morning, is given as a version from which all the drinking sentiments of the original are expelled? All is innocent, all merry. And the best of it is that these pleasant bits of sing-song never, never die; there is a vitality about them which more pretentious compositions never possess. Ask the publishers of cheap children's books whether their sale—and a very large one too—be not for the very same little songs which serve one generation after another? New ventures sometimes make their appearance, but their composition requires much tact and much knowledge of the characteristics of children. Yes, children's songs must certainly find a place in the subject of which we are speaking.

GEORGIE'S WOOR.

A STORY IN THIRTEEN CHAPTERS.

CHAPTER XI.

It was weary work for Georgie Hammond answering letters about the house and the terms of taking it; planning this household matter and that; setting aside the things that could not be done without in the projected life in lodgings at Collingford, and making lists and inventories of those that must be given up.

Worst of all trials were the innocent questions of the little ones, who had at last begun to understand that papa was gone away, "never to come back any more," but who were now sorely troubled to find that all the household gods seemed likely to go too. Even Shag, that patient, steady little beast, with a back so broad that he hardly needed a saddle at all, even he must go, and they would have no more pleasant outings, "ride and tie," turn and turn about, with Dandy barking like mad whenever Shag broke into a canter, and Nurse Hughes getting sadly out of breath in trying to overtake the little steed and his rider.

One whole morning Georgie determined to devote to putting away her father's botanical specimens and library; things that, no matter what their marketable value might be, she determined never, never to part with.

Ah me! the bitter pain of turning over the records of the active mind of one whom we have "loved, and lost awhile!"

The notes made by the dear hand that now lies cold and still; the half-finished essay that will never now be completed; the book-mark that tells us where he last left off reading; the pencil-marks here and there that show us what particular passage caught his fancy or aroused his sympathies! These things, like sweet, sad echoes from a dead past, seem to speak to us in the well remembered voice that we shall hear no more on earth.

In the midst of Georgie's trying task, a task during which the hot tears often blinded her, and had to be dashed aside that she might persevere in her work, they came to say that someone had called to see her.

"It's the gentleman as keeps the bank," said Nurse Hughes, "and he's in the drawing-room."

"Something about the house, no doubt," said the young mistress.

But it was not anything about the house that brought Willoughby Robinson to call upon Miss Hammond.

From the first moment Georgie entered the room, her visitor looked uncomfortable and ill at ease, more depressed and subdued than even was his meek wont.

He had an air of restless expectancy, the fact being that he dreaded of all things to see his wife sail into the room, and hear her address him by that awful title "Robinson," as pronounced by her in moments of wrath; indeed, he had about

him such a general air of guilt that a spectator might have been led to suppose he was contemplating something criminal.

"My dear," he said, holding Georgie's hand in one of his, and patting it gently with the other, "I'm very sorry to hear you're in so much trouble. My girl was telling me all about it, and I've come to say that I'll take the little pony if you'll let me. It will do first-rate for an open trap for Nettie, and I thought, as the little beast had been a pet, you'd like to know it was where it will be well done by. Besides, my bank's not broke yet, and if I can be of any help—God bless my soul! don't do that, my dear girl, whatever you do!"

"That" was first raising his honest hand to her lips, and then sitting down and breaking out into bitter weeping. I fear Georgie's nerves had been unstrung by her sad morning's work; anyway, the flood-gates of sorrow were opened by the sound of kindly words.

Here was a situation for the Sheeling banker! And Mrs. Robinson might appear at any moment!

If the generality of men naturally hate the sight of a woman's tears, what was such a spectacle likely to be to the tender-hearted Mr. Robinson, whose feelings were kept in a state of perpetual repression by his spouse, and therefore the more ready to burst forth when a safety-valve offered itself?

He walked to the glass door, and looked with apparently critical interest at the various shrubs and trees therein contained, all looking their very worst in consequence of a thaw, that had set in that morning. Here he stood whistling softly to himself, and blinking his eyes behind his spectacles.

In leaving the girl alone, he did the wisest thing possible, for she soon recovered herself, and, meaning to try and put into words the gratitude she felt for his delicate thoughtfulness, got up and came beside him.

But Georgie suddenly stopped in a half-uttered word of thanks, while every trace of colour forsook her cheek. There was no mistake about it now—no thinking it might, or it might not be. There, at the gate leading from the shore—the gate at which he had once met her with such evil tidings, stood Douglas Ainsleigh!

As he caught sight of her, he flung his cigar into the dripping laurel bushes, doffed his hat, like one in presence of a

queen, and then, still bareheaded, made his way to the house.

In this critical condition of affairs, the banker developed an amount of presence of mind for which afterwards he gave himself great credit. He stepped forward, opened the glass doors, admitted the "coming guest," forbore to make any remark on his sudden appearance in that part of the world, and without more ado took his leave of Georgie and her visitor.

As he walked across to the bank, Mr. Robinson hummed—not whistled—softly to himself. Now with him, this was a sign of great inward satisfaction, just as purring is a sign of Pussy's content; yet never a word did he say to the wife of his bosom, or even to Nettie herself, of Douglas Ainsleigh's advent, when those ladies returned from their drive in the "vehicle."

Thus once more, Douglas Ainsleigh stood face to face with the one woman that the world held for him. He clasped her little cold hand in his, and forgot to let it go, while his eager, loving eyes—how could anyone call them hard and cold?—noted every detail of the cruel work that sorrow and suffering had wrought; the pallid cheek, that had somewhat lost the fair, round outline of youth; the sad, weary eyes, telling of sleepless nights, and many tears.

Georgie strove hard for calmness; but the attempt was not altogether a success. She sat down by the window, and clasped her hands tightly in her lap, hoping by that means to hide how much they trembled. She quite forgot to express any surprise at seeing Captain Ainsleigh there, and he forgot to explain his own appearance on the scene. Both at first were preternaturally silent, particularly Georgie; but in the clear dark mirrors of her eyes he read the same old word of four letters—"Love," and he had much ado to refrain from taking her in his arms then and there, and trying to kiss some colour back into the lips that had grown like faded rose-leaves since he saw them last; for love that is pure, and true, and loyal is not at its fondest when a woman's beauty is brightest, but in the day of her sorrow and her pain, when it longs with a passionate tenderness to comfort and sustain.

Captain Ainsleigh stood beside Georgie, with his arms folded, and with fond eyes looking down upon her—eyes whose gaze she felt as we feel the glow of sunshine. His voice held a thrill of passion which found an echo in the girl's own heart, and yet to which she dared not or would not yield.

"I have felt for you so deeply, Miss Hammond! Georgie, oh, my poor child, how you must have suffered! I have thought of you day and night since I left, but I could not get away before. Won't you give me a word of welcome now?"

"Yes," she said, looking up, "I am glad you are come. He liked you so much that I have often thought of you in this sad time—he spoke of you many times—since you went away. Oh, Captain Ainsleigh, seeing you brings it all back to me!" she added, with a pitiful quiver round her mouth.

"Of course it does—I thought of that before I came; but yet I had hoped you would find some comfort in seeing me—because I hoped you knew how dear you were to me, Georgie; and that it was only because you were in such trouble that I did not tell you so. Oh, my darling! it was hard work going without a word."

Carried away by the strength and might of his tenderness, he ventured to lay a soft, caressing touch on the bowed head with its crown of shining, rippled braids, as he said, very softly:

"My wife that is to be—isn't it so, Georgie?"

Then Georgie looked up at him, and the true eyes told the same old tale, but the mouth trembled like that of a troubled child. So Douglas knelt beside her, and put his arm about her, and would have kissed that sad little mouth, and perhaps—who knows?—brought a smile back to it again. But she put him gently from her, and rose from her chair, so that perforce he had to rise too.

Yet how like a tired child, weary with wandering in a desolate way, and finding all at once some safe place of rest and refuge, had Georgie felt as that strong arm clasped her close! She could have laid her head down upon his breast, and felt as if the load of troubles, and plans, and perplexities that made it ache so often were laid there at rest too—as if nothing could ever hurt her as long as that loving arm was round her, to hold and shield her evermore!

For if Georgie had doubted whether she loved Douglas Ainsleigh well enough to be his wife, she knew the truth in that short moment when he held her close against his breast; knew that every fibre of her being thrilled a sweet echo to the passion and tenderness of his; that henceforth to be with him would be content and rest and joy, and, even in the day of trouble, the best and surest comfort; to be

parted from him the only sorrow that could sap the well-springs of joy out of her life.

But the old training came to Georgie's aid, the lines by which the father had taught his girl to measure life in all its bearings.

"Fais ce que dois, advienne que pourra!"

Come what might! no matter the pain, and the weary, lonely hours that may follow; no matter the stumbling of tired feet, the stretching forth of trembling hands, the eyes blind with hot tears, so that they cannot see "clear shining" on the tops of the eternal hills.

"Fais ce que dois——"

And Georgie thought she saw very plainly what she ought to do, and essayed to do it; but perhaps her courage hardly answered readily to the call made upon it, for she trembled very much as she stood by the fireside, and rested one hand on the mantel-shelf, and her voice, when she spoke, was low and full of effort.

"I am sure, Captain Ainsleigh, you have not forgotten how happy papa and I used to be together? I can hardly bring myself to speak about it all yet—it has been so newly taken from me; but you know what it was—what he was to me—and I to him——"

Her listener murmured a word of sympathy, but there was something in the girl's look and manner that held him back from any more demonstrative expression of feeling.

She, as she spoke, looked dreamily out into the dreary day, as though she watched some sad phantasmagoria of days that would never come again. He gazed at her, and a new trouble came into his heart as he caught the line of thought that had taken her back to the fond sympathy existing in the past between her father and herself, and he saw whither it would lead.

"There is something very sacred to me, Captain Ainsleigh, in the thought of how happy we were, he and I; it is so sacred to me that I dare not be the means of coming between others equally happy, equally close to each other—even if it seemed to be——"

She stopped short, and a faint colour stole into her cheek.

He knew only too well what she meant; and he read her well enough to know that what in another woman might have been mere caprice, or done for effect, and of no solid power of resistance, was in Georgie Hammond a reality, a something against

which reasoning and fondness would be alike powerless. She was terribly in earnest—this slight, pale girl with the sad eyes, and he knew that to lead her to see and feel a thing to be right was the only way to shake any resolve which was the result of conscientious thought.

"But, Georgie," said Douglas, obstinately using the informal name, and being for once in his life uncandid, ignoring the latter part of what she had been saying, "I'm sure your father wouldn't have been afraid to give you to me if he had been sure you loved me enough; you said yourself he liked me, Georgie——"

"Yes; but, Captain Ainsleigh, your mother does not like me. She would not like me to be——"

"My wife?" he added, as she hesitated.

"Yes," said Georgie, bravely, strong in the firmness of the ground she felt herself standing upon. "And I will not—I will not come between you two, who have always been so happy together, just as I and my dear, dear father once were! You have no right to blame Mrs. Ainsleigh because she would not like such a thing!" she went on hurriedly, seeing the bitter annoyance in his face, and dreading what he might be about to say; "It is very natural: look at it fairly, and you will see how right she is; think of how I stand in the world just now; think of all these troubles—these debts—and my two poor darlings, with no one else but me to look to—and ask yourself if Mrs. Ainsleigh is wrong in not—liking—me?"

The energy that had helped Georgie through this speech failed a little at the end, and her voice faltered.

Douglas longed to deny the truth of what she said; but there is no doubt of the fact that there are people in the world to whom it is very hard to lie; people in whose guileless faces you cannot look and say, or even try to say, that black is white; and, with those violet eyes on his, Douglas Ainsleigh was constrained to let the truth stand, and not try to gloss it over.

"But how do you know my mother does not like you, and that if you were to be my wife you would, as you say, come between us?" he asked, desperate at having to recognise the truth of her statement, yet seeing no other way.

"She came to see me not long after I had lost my dear father," returned the girl, shrinking from going over the old ground, yet seeing no way of escape. "She was very kind; but when I told her all about my troubles, and the plans I had

made, and asked her to help me, there was a change I felt, though she never said an unkind word; and I knew, though I can hardly tell you how, that she was repulsed by all this. Besides, I cannot tell—she may have thought—she may have fancied—when you were here before—

He enjoyed her confusion for a few selfish moments, refusing to help her out of a difficulty she had imprudently strayed into; then he shifted his ground in a twofold sense, drawing a step nearer to her, and looking quite capable of falling into his former demonstrative mode of conduct.

"She may have fancied her son loved you, my darling! when did you begin to 'fancy' he did so?"

But she would not be lured away from the safe shore of hard, dry fact, to launch upon the troubled sea of sentiment.

It would not do to let that loving arm fold about her again; to risk encountering a second time that enemy within the citadel—her own traitor heart.

So, thinking that "silence is golden," and speech often dangerous when we fear to say too much, Georgie held her peace. Then came the hardest trial of all, for her companion turned away, and a look of wounded pride came into the face hitherto so tender.

"You are being very hard upon me, and upon yourself. Yes, Georgie, I will say it—upon yourself too. You will not listen to the voice of your own heart; for it was not from your heart you were speaking before; and it is your lips, not your heart, that are silent now."

"Does she know you are here—and why you are here?" interrupted the girl, her colour coming hotly, and her voice firm with the fever-strength passion gives, and which yields such a bitter aftermath of weakness and pain.

He flushed at her words, for they hit home, reminding him of the chill estrangement that had been maintained between his mother and himself since the previous night—the silence on the one subject that engrossed both their thoughts, a silence she dare not, and he would not, break.

Captain Ainsleigh would have given a great deal to be able to give a different reply to the girl's question; but the true eyes again dragged the truth from him.

"No, Miss Hammond, my mother does

not know, though it is possible she may guess that I am here, and why. I am not a boy, to give an account of my comings and goings."

"I know! I know!" she cried, with a sob that cut to his heart like a knife; "but you were always at one, always close together, you two. You were like my dear and I! And, oh! I have come between you!"

"I will not hear this," he said, maddened by the sight of her grief and the sound of her weeping. "I will hear nothing about anybody else in the world save you and me. I want you to answer me a plain honest question. Georgie, do you love me well enough to be my wife, and to let me take all—mind, dear—all your troubles and difficulties as my own?"

There was no flaw of affectation in this girl's nature, no prudery that could lead her to try and enhance her own value by giving grudgingly back the candour and truth given to her. She was not one of those women who will let a man read the story he longs for, in eyes and voice, in greetings and partings, and then hesitate and take refuge in a spurious modesty, when speech is called upon to ratify the silent promises already given. So the nature that was true as steel asserted itself.

Georgie raised her head, which had been bowed low upon her hands, and looked up into the face so full of yearning tenderness that bent over her. . . .

"I do love you," she said simply, "but I cannot be your wife. He would not have thought it right—and I must do what I know he would have wished, even if it is hard to do."

And from this fiat Douglas found that there was no appeal.

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